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Message Text

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PAGE 01 STOCKH 05349 020956Z

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ACTION EUR-12

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---------- 048135
R 291540Z NOV 74
FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3424
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

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E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, SW, FI

SUBJECT: FINNISH AMBASSADOR'S COMPLAINT RE ARTICLE ON SOVIET
EMBASSY ROLE IN HELSINKI

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR TAG

1. AN ARTICLE ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION'S ROLE INFINNISH
POLITICS WHICH APPEARED IN THE STOCKHOLM MODERATE PARTY
DAILY SVENSKA DAGBLADET ON NOV. 20 APPARENTLY IRRITATED THE FINNISH
GOVERNMENT TO THE EXTENT THAT FINNISH AMBASSADOR MAX
JAKOBSON CALLED ON THE PAPER'S EDITOR NOV. 26 TO EXPRESS
HIS GOVERNMENT'S DISPLEASURE.

2. ALTHOUGH THE ARTICLE IN QUESTION APPEARED UNDER RATHER
DRAMATIC HEADLINE CLAIMING THAT THE PAPER HAD "ACCESS TO
SECRET COMMUNIST PARTY DOCUMENTS" WHICH REVEALED HOW SOVIET
AMBASSADOR TO FINLAND STEPANOV IS ACTING TO INFLUENCE
FINNISH POLITICS, THE SUBSTANCE OF THE STORY CONTAINED
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PAGE 02 STOCKH 05349 020956Z

LITTLE THAT IS NEW. PROBABLY THE MOST INTERESTING PART

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

OF THE STORY PERTAINS TO A MEETING OF THE TWO FACTIONS OF THE DIVIDED FINNISH COMMUNIST PARTY (SKP) IN THE SOVIET UNION LAST JULY, AT WHICH THE SKP WAS TOLD BY CPSU OFFICIALS HOW TO "CONQUER FINLAND FROM WITHIN" BY INTENSIFIED INFILTRATION OF THE ARMY AND POLICE, GREATER CONTROL OF THE MASS MEDIA, AND EXPANDED COOPERATION WITH THE SOCIALDEMOCRATS AND CENTER PARTY. ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, "IN THIS OPERATION THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN HELSINKI WILL PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE.

3. IN A SVENSKA DAGBLADET ARTICLE NOV. 27 REPORTING THE JAKOBSON DEMARCHE, THE PAPER'S EDITOR (VON PLATEN) DEFENDED THE PUBLICATION OF THE ARTICLE AS A REFLECTION OF FREE DEBATE WITHIN THE SWEDISH PRESS. FURTHERMORE, VON PLATEN ASSERTED, "THAT THE FINNISH COMMUNIST PARTY, AS ITS PARTY COMRADES ELSEWHERE SEEKS A REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN SOCIETY IS NO SECRET." HOWEVER, THE EDITOR ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IN ASSUMING THAT FINLAND COULD BE "TAKEN OVER," THE ARTICLE'S WRITER, GORAN ALBINSSON, "STRONGLY UNDERESTIMATES FINLAND'S WILL AND ABILITY TO UPHOLD THE UNIQUE POSITION AMONG SOVIET NEIGHBORS WHICH IT SO CONVINCINGLY HAS DEMONSTRATED ON MANY OCCASIONS." IN A RADIO INTERVIEW THE SAME DAY, ALBINSSON INSISTED THATHIS SOURCES FOR THE ARTICLE WERE "IMPECCABLE," ADDING THAT HE WOULD NOT WANT TO CHANGE ONE WORD OF IT.

4. EMBASSY IS POUCHING FULL ARTICLE TO EMBASSY HELSINKI AND DEPARTMENT (EUR/NE).

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS FINNS, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE GOVERN-
MENT HAVE FREQUENTLY USED THE SWEDISH PRESS IN THE PAST TO SURFACE ARTICLES THAT FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER MIGHT VIOLATE THE UNWRITTEN RULE THAT THE FINNISH PRESS SHOULD AVOID INITIATING STORIESTHAT WOULD BE OFFENSIVE TO THE SOVIETS. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO THE SAME UNWRITTEN RULES OF THE GAME, ONCE A STORY APPEARS IN A SWEDISH PAPER (OR ELSEWHERE ABROAD) FINNISH PAPERS SUPPOSEDLY HAVE FREE REIN TO REPRINT IT.

6. EMBASSY HELSINKI MAY WISH TO COMMENT ON WHETHER THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REACTION OF THE FINNISH GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE DEMARCHE BY AMBASSADOR JAKOBSON, IS MORE THAN A PRO FORMA ACTION BY THE FINNS TO ASSURE THE SOVIETS THEY DO NOT SHARE THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE ARTICLE.
STRAUSZ-HUPE

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